



unitarian universalist CONGREGATION OF DANBURY

Testimony of Lynn Taborsak
Social Action Committee

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury
on HB 6390, AAC Access to Postsecondary Education
March 15, 2011

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Senator Bye, Representative Willis and committee members. I am here to testify in support of HB 6390, An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education and I will cut to the chase so that everyone who wishes to speak has the opportunity to be heard.

In 2008 our congregation went through a process to become a "New Sanctuary Congregation". We made a commitment to welcome and support the newest immigrants to our community regardless of their immigration status.

Danbury has a population of 80,000. It's the 7th largest city in Connecticut. According to census projections, Hispanic or Latino residents made up 25% of our population.

We have one of the state's largest public high schools, with just under 3000 students. 600 to 700 members of the Class of 2011 will graduate this June. Many of them will apply to Western Connecticut State University – a jewel of the state university system located in Danbury.

WestCONN will receive about six thousand applications for the 800 slots in its' freshman class. That won't change with passage of this bill. The application process is very competitive. Students are selected based on high school rank, SAT scores, high school grades and a written essay they submit with their application.

Danbury High graduates who are accepted at WestCONN through this competitive process are then separated into two groups. Those that will pay in-state tuition of \$4451 a semester and those that will pay double that amount or \$9634 a semester.

They aren't different at all. They are Danbury residents, residents of the state of Connecticut; they are capable, intelligent young people who will play an important role in our educated workforce and our state's economic future.

This bill is about fairness. Please give all of our qualified Connecticut students the same access to postsecondary education.